

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Division of Law Enforcement Weekly Report



Patrol, Protect, Preserve

July 26, 2019 through August 1, 2019

This report represents some events the FWC handled over the past week; however, it does not include all actions taken by the Division of Law Enforcement.

NORTHWEST REGION

CASES

BAY COUNTY

Officers N. Basford and Brady were on water patrol when they saw a vessel entering Grand Lagoon from the Panama City Pass. The officers stopped the vessel to conduct a marine fisheries inspection. During their inspection the operator showed signs of impairment. The officers administered field sobriety tasks and arrested the operator for boating under the influence and cited him for refusing to provide a breath sample. The operator was transported to the Bay County Jail.

Officer N. Basford was working in St. Andrews State Park when she saw a truck driving fast and fail to stop at a stop sign. She conducted a vehicle stop to address the violation. The operator had never owned a driver license. He had an infant in the truck that was not buckled into a child restraint device. The operator was cited for driving without a driver license and for failing to utilize a child restraint device. He was also issued warnings for failing to stop at the stop sign and excessive speed.

Officers N. Basford, Rice and Brady received reports of several individuals who were camping in a non-designated area in Pine Log State Forest. The officers arrived at the location where there were two individuals at the camp. Numerous illegal drugs and paraphernalia were located, including 19.9 grams of marijuana and 5.4 grams of crystal meth. One subject was arrested and booked into Bay County Jail for possession of crystal meth, possession of marijuana under 20 grams, giving false name to law enforcement and possession of drug paraphernalia. The subject also had an active

arrest warrant for violation of probation and received two citations for violations of rules pertaining to State Forest.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

Officer Specialist Clark was on patrol when he attempted a traffic stop on a vehicle for careless driving. The vehicle's driver did not stop and continued to drive at a high rate of speed through residential neighborhoods. He stopped pursuing but continued to search for the vehicle. Officer Long assisted with the search and while driving through the neighborhood, located a vehicle fitting the description of the vehicle that fled. Officer Clark arrived on scene and confirmed it was the vehicle in question. A neighbor told Officer Long that the person driving the vehicle drove through the neighborhood at a high rate of speed, parked and ran inside the house. Officers tried to contact the driver but he would not answer the door. The driver was identified through arrest net and confirmed by the neighbor and Officer Clark as the subject. The vehicle was towed, and a warrant activated for Flee/Elude Officer /Disregard Safety of Others, a second-degree felony. Bond was set at \$25,000.

Officer Specialist's Clark, Cushing, Corbin, Investigator Pifer, Officer's Long, Lugg and Wilkenson participated in a Targeted Enforcement Action for boating under the influence in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties. The enforcement effort lasted two days and officers checked over 65 vessels and contacted more than 168 users. The results of the TEA included 20 boating safety warnings, four resource warnings, 19 uniform boating citations, six resource citations, two BUI arrests, seven misdemeanor arrests and one search and rescue.

Officer Long and Officer Specialist Clark were conducting resource and license checks at the NAS Pensacola East seawall. One dead undersized Spanish mackerel was found in a bucket and four undersized and mutilated Spanish mackerel were discovered in a crab trap while inspecting the catch of two individuals. The largest of the catch measured seven inches long. The subjects admitted to using the mackerel as bait and stated that they were unaware that they were committing a crime. The individuals were educated on current regulations and cited accordingly with a misdemeanor citation for possession of undersized Spanish mackerel and a warning for not landing their catch in whole condition.

Officer Long, Officer Specialist Clark, and Investigator Pifer observed a vessel actively engaged in fishing on the Northeast side of the Three Mile Bridge channel. They conducted a resource and safety inspection and Officer Long discovered an undersized and mutilated spanish mackerel. The fish was missing the tail portion, and the captain of the vessel admitted to using the mackerel as bait. Current Florida law requires regulated fish to be landed in whole condition. The captain was cited accordingly.

Officers Corbin and Cushing were on patrol in Bayou Chico when they saw a vessel with fishing equipment displayed. A vessel stop was conducted for a resource

inspection. An undersized gag grouper and a triggerfish were in a fish box. The two subjects claimed responsibility for the violations and were issued citations accordingly.

Officers Corbin and Cushing were on water patrol when they saw a vessel returning to the Pensacola Pass with fishing equipment displayed. The vessel was a charter and a resource inspection was conducted. During the inspection two filets and three undersized vermillion snappers were located. The captain of the vessel stated the filets were from a triple tail. The captain of the vessel was issued a citation.

GULF COUNTY

Officer Specialist Webb was conducting dockside marine fisheries inspections in Port Saint Joe when he stopped a vessel returning from fishing inside St. Joe Bay. The operator admitted to catching spotted sea trout. An inspection revealed that he had a large zip lock bag full of trout fillets. He was cited for failure to land trout in whole condition and issued a warning for a boating safety violation.

Officer Specialists M. Webb and H. Webb were patrolling the Gulf of Mexico ensuring compliance with fisheries regulations and boating safety. They stopped an inbound vessel that was returning from fishing 12 miles out from Cape San Blas. An inspection revealed the operator had a 29-inch amberjack (5 inches short). He was cited for possession of out of season amberjack and warned for the undersize and no gulf reef fish permit.

OKALOOSA COUNTY

Officer Nichols responded to Eglin Range Road 234 to assist Eglin Range Patrol with a traffic stop. The subject was stopped for not wearing a seatbelt and use of a telecommunication device while driving. The subject did not own a driver license and did not have an Eglin recreational permit. While Eglin Range Patrol was conducting a search of the vehicle, they located a small clear bag containing a white substance. Field tests of the substance were positive for Methamphetamine. Officer Nichols booked the subject into the Okaloosa County Jail on possession of methamphetamine (.08 grams), no driver license and no Eglin recreation permit.

Officer Nichols responded to a litter complaint in Fort Walton Beach where someone had been dumping tires, construction debris and trash onto Eglin WMA property. Officer Nichols located the dump area behind a new construction site, took photos, and contacted Investigator Hughes. DEP Environmental Investigators were made aware of the situation. Officer Nichols forwarded the information, photos, and body cam videos of the incident to DEP Investigators for follow up.

Lieutenant Bartlett and Officers McVaney and Hilderbrand conducted a vessel stop on a rental PWC at Crab Island for violation of the idle speed zone. While conducting the boating safety inspection, the operator showed multiple signs of impairment and field sobriety tasks were conducted. The operator was arrested for BUI and refused to

provide a breath sample. A citation was issued for violation of the speed zone and the operator was booked into the Okaloosa County Jail.

Officer Corbin responded to a possible boating accident where a sailboat broke anchor and drifted into a marina hitting two docked vessels. The owners of all three vessels were identified by the marina manager. An inspection of the vessels revealed no apparent damage and the sailboat was unoccupied when it broke anchor. The owner of the sailboat was issued a citation for the vessel being at risk of becoming derelict. The owner of one of the other vessels arrived and provided paperwork showing it was purchased in December of 2018 and had never been registered with the state. The owner of the vessel was issued a notice to appear citation for failure to register a documented vessel.

Officer Corbin and Investigator Pifer received information of subjects catching and keeping undersize Spanish mackerel and banded rudderfish from the Okaloosa Island Pier. Resource inspections were conducted on the pier and four subjects were found to be in possession of undersize Spanish mackerel and banded rudderfish. Appropriate citations were issued for the violations.

Officers Corbin, Long, and Wilkenson were on water patrol when they saw a vessel being operated without a registration decal or registration numbers. The vessel was also overloaded, with nine subjects on board while being rated for five. A vessel stop was conducted, and the owner of the vessel was unable to provide the registration certificate or the proper boating safety equipment. The owner of the vessel stated he had purchased the vessel in September of 2018 and had not transferred the title nor registered the vessel in his name. The owner of the vessel was issued a notice to appear citation for failure to transfer title/registration. The owner was also issued citations and warnings related to the registration and boating safety equipment.

Officers Corbin, Long, and Wilkenson were on water patrol when they conducted a vessel stop for a boating safety inspection. During the vessel stop the operator showed several signs of impairment and field sobriety tasks were conducted. The operator was arrested for BUI and provided two breath samples of .134 blood alcohol content and .144 blood alcohol content.

Officers Hahr and Swindell were on patrol when they were dispatched to a boating accident in the Destin Harbor. When they arrived on scene, they saw a broken skeg and damaged propeller on a docked pontoon boat. The operator of the other boat was maneuvering a large double decker pontoon boat in tight quarters near the docked boat when the accident occurred. When he bumped into the docked vessel, he hit the throttle instead of easing away and slid along the raised motor which caused the damage. The operator was cited for a violation of a navigational Rule 6 (safe speed).

Officers Swindell and Hahr were patrolling near Crab Island when they saw a boat coming directly at them and not changing course. A short distance away from them, the operator of the boat came to a complete stop as she looked at the officers. A few

moments later, she turned hard to the right and continued around the officers and then hit the throttle in the no wake zone and sped up. The officers stopped the vessel and detected indicators of impairment from the operator. After conducting field sobriety tasks, she was arrested for BUI. A breath test indicated that the operator's breath alcohol level was .097 blood alcohol content.

Officers Hahr and Swindell were patrolling in the Destin Harbor when they saw a vessel leaving Noriega Beach with two children onboard not wearing life jackets. They stopped the vessel and determined the operator didn't have enough life jackets. During the stop, signs of impairment were displayed, and field sobriety tasks were conducted. The operator was placed under arrest for BUI and transported to the Okaloosa County Jail.

Officers Hahr and Wilkenson were patrolling in the Destin area when they saw the Destin Fire/Rescue boat bringing a patient into the Coast Guard Station. A 16-year-old girl had been struck by a personal watercraft. She was complaining of pain in her arm and was having trouble breathing. She was transported to the local hospital while the officers went to the scene of the accident. They located the livery that rented the PWCs and determined that the other parties involved had gone to the hospital. Officer Hahr arrived at the hospital and determined that the operator of one PWC's was repeatedly spraying the 16-year-old and her passenger as he sped past her. On the last approach, the operator's child passenger pulled the handlebars at the last moment, directing their PWC to strike the girl. The operator was issued a notice to appear for reckless operation.

Officers Hahr and Wilkenson were patrolling in the Destin area when they saw a vessel being operated without registration numbers. The officers stopped the vessel to address the violation and saw indicators that the operator may be impaired. Field sobriety tasks were conducted, and the operator was arrested for BUI. He refused to provide a breath sample and was transported to the Okaloosa County Jail.

SANTA ROSA COUNTY

Officer Mullins saw a subject fishing from the bank while on patrol on the Escambia River. The subject had multiple lines out for catfish. While checking the subject it was discovered that he was illegally using bream as bait on a bush hook line, failed to tag his line, and was fishing without a license. The subject was issued a notice to appear for the violations.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING – EXPANDING PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION

Officers Lugg and Wilkenson canvassed a neighborhood in Gulf Breeze educating the residents on bears and informing them on the laws referencing attractants and bears. The officers visited approximately 100 homes speaking with residents and passing out educational material on living with bears in Florida. This effort will be followed up with

law enforcement patrols of the neighborhood to ensure compliance with the law due to recent bear complaints.

WALTON COUNTY

Officer White checked two subjects fishing in Choctawhatchee Bay. A records check revealed one of the subjects had an active warrant from Ohio for grand theft. The subject was taken into custody and turned over to the Walton County Sheriff's Department for extradition.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

CASES

DUVAL COUNTY

Officers Lemaster and Schirbock conducted resource inspections at Stinson Park near the Ortega River. One person they checked gave Officer Schirbock an alias that he recognized from an arrest Lieutenant Arkin made in 2018 on an alligator possession case. The subject's true name was discovered and confirmed with Lieutenant Arkin. A check through law enforcement databases revealed active warrants. The subject had four felony warrants issued by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office for defrauding a financial institution, unlawful application for a driver license, criminal use of personal identification, and altering a forged document. The subject was issued a fishing license violation written warning and arrested for the warrants.

Officer Lemaster responded to a criminal mischief call in Little Talbot State Park. The assistant park manager reported a subject ran through a closed fence/gate at the park with a vehicle, causing substantial damage. A few minutes later, the assistant manager witnessed a former employee trespassing in a restricted area. The assistant manager confronted the individual about being intoxicated and fishing in a restricted area of the park. The former employee sped off in a vehicle. Officer Lemaster and Officer Barry interviewed the former employee at his residence. The former employee invoked the Miranda Warning and refused to answer any questions. The officers were able to get photographs of the vehicle allegedly involved in the incident, parked at the residence. There was damage consistent with someone hitting a fence or pole. Charges for felony criminal mischief, trespass and leaving the scene of an accident will be filed with the state attorney's office. The former employee was also issued a permanent trespass warning for all state parks in Duval and Nassau Counties.

Officer Shearer was on patrol ensuring compliance with boating safety and resource regulations at the Joe Carlucci Boat Ramp. He saw a subject nearly fall out of his truck after pulling a boat from the water. The subject displayed signs of impairment and field sobriety tasks were conducted. The subject was arrested and booked into the Duval County Jail for DUI and refusal to submit to breath test.

BAKER COUNTY

Over the past two months, Officers have received complaints about stolen road sign posts in John Bethea State Forest. Patrols were increased in the area, leading to Officer Fanelli identifying and interviewing a suspect. The suspect admitted to taking several sign posts and charges were filed with the state attorney's office.

NORTHEAST REGION

CASES

VOLUSIA COUNTY

Officer Thornton stopped a vessel that was being operated carelessly, throttling up and down, and swerving left to right on the St. Johns River in the area of Butchers Bend. He initiated a vessel stop to check the operator's wellbeing and to perform a boating safety inspection. The operator displayed signs of impairment and was arrested for boating under the influence. The operator provided a sample of his breath which was 0.194 and 0.192.

Officer North received a complaint at the end of hunting season about an ongoing trespassing issue in Edgewater. The landowner was getting sporadic trail camera pictures of men with bulldogs entering the property and leaving with dead wild hogs between midnight and 4:00 AM. Officer North patrolled the property for several weeks with no success. Officer North was contacted by the landowner who had a clear picture of a person he thought he recognized carrying a rifle on the property. Working with the FWC investigations section, Officer North was able to identify the subject and secure a felony warrant for armed trespass. The suspect was arrested on the warrant by a local agency and booked into the Volusia County Jail.

Officer North saw a truck shining a spotlight from the driver's side window. A shot was fired out of the window and the truck was stopped as it left the property. The driver said he shot a coyote, but when he saw the patrol vehicle he panicked and threw his rifle out the window. Officer North deployed his K9, Max, who located the discarded rifle and a freshly killed 10-point whitetail buck in the area where the shot was fired. A second rifle was located on the back seat of the suspect's truck. Three men were arrested for taking deer at night with a gun and light.

Officers Fletcher and Ward were on patrol in Tiger Bay State Forest when they encountered two parked vehicles. The state forest is open to the public between sunrise and sunset, which is posted at the entrance. A juvenile in one of the vehicles was in possession of marijuana and drug paraphernalia. Another juvenile was in possession of alcohol. Citations were issued for entering the state forest after hours. Both minors were released to parents with notices to appear for the drug and alcohol violations.

ST. JOHNS COUNTY

Officer Thomas observed a vessel traveling west underneath the Inlet Bridge returning from a day of fishing. Officer Thomas previously received complaints about this vessel and contacted the vessel operator at his dock slip. The subject was in possession of over the bag limit of king mackerel and said he dropped someone off at a local boat ramp. Officer Thomas said she saw him traveling through the Inlet Bridge with no other occupants on board his vessel. The subject was issued a citation for possession of over the bag limit of king mackerel.

LAKE COUNTY

Officers Shaw and Weber responded to an ultralight aircraft crash on Lake Beauclair. The pilot of the aircraft was found and had succumbed to his injuries from the crash. The crash is being investigated by the Lake County Sheriff's Office.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING – EXPANDING PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION

LAKE COUNTY

Officer Morrow attended an outreach conducted by the Lake County Sheriff's Office for their Teen Camp. This involved educating high school students and explorers from around the county on many aspects of law enforcement. Officer Morrow explained FWC's mission and priorities.

SOUTHWEST REGION

CASES

CITRUS COUNTY

Officer Winton conducted vessel stops on two boats traveling on plane within 100 yards of vessels with dive flags displayed and swimmers in the water. Both operators were issued notices to appear for reckless operation of a vessel.

Officer Winton stopped a fishing vessel transiting in from offshore waters to conduct a fisheries inspection. During the inspection, he located an undersized hogfish. The responsible subject was identified and was issued a notice to appear for possession of undersized hogfish.

Officer Winton was on vessel patrol in Crystal River when he stopped a fishing vessel traveling upriver. During the inspection, Officer Winton discovered an undersized cobia,

as well as three undersized/out-of-season greater amberjack. The captain of the vessel was issued a notice to appear for the violations.

LEE COUNTY

Officer Winton was on vessel patrol in the Caloosahatchee River when he stopped two jet skis for violating a slow speed zone. It was determined that both jet skis had been rented in Cape Coral and were missing several items of safety gear. Additionally, the occupants of the vessel were required to have proof of completion of boater safety training but had not been asked to provide documentation by the rental company. Officer Winton contacted the renter of the jet skis and found he did not have the appropriate liability coverage to rent jet skis. Multiple charges pertaining to livery violations are being filed with the State Attorney's Office.

Officer Winton was on vessel patrol in the Caloosahatchee River when he stopped a pontoon boat with an expired registration. It was determined that the pontoon boat was a rental boat and the livery operator was contacted. The livery operator did not have the boater safety training required to rent vessels to the public. Officer Winton issued the livery operator a boating citation for the expired registration and charges pertaining to livery violations are being filed with the State Attorney's Office.

Officer Winton responded to reports of a company destroying a gopher tortoise burrow on a property in Cape Coral. Officer Winton determined that the construction company had a permit from FWC to remove the burrow but had not properly posted it. The construction company also had failed to obtain permits from the city prior to commencing removal activities which is a violation of the FWC permit conditions. Officer Winton issued the permit holder a notice to appear for the permit violation, and a warning for failure to post the permit on the job site.

MANATEE COUNTY

Officer Dalton was on water patrol around Longboat Pass in Manatee County. He performed a fisheries inspection on a vessel returning from fishing in the gulf. During the inspection, Officer Dalton found that one of the subject on the vessel had caught and kept a twelve-inch tripletail. The subject was cited criminally for possession of an undersized tripletail.

PASCO COUNTY

Senior Officer Pulaski and Officer Rothchild were on water patrol in the Anclote River area when they saw a vessel violate the idle speed zone. The officers stopped the vessel to address the violation and noticed signs of impairment from the operator. Seated Field Sobriety Tasks were conducted and the operator was arrested for boating under the influence and issued a warning for the idle speed zone violation.

Officer Rothchild was on land patrol in the Aripeka area when he saw several individuals trespassing on private property. He approached them to address the violation. Officers Holcomb and Canamero responded to assist. During identification of the subjects, one individual came back as a missing juvenile. The juvenile was taken into protective custody and turned over to the Pasco County Sheriff's Office to be returned to his family.

PINELLAS COUNTY

Officer Specialist Bibeau stopped a vessel to conduct a fisheries inspection. He boarded the vessel and located a thirteen-inch red grouper. The operator of the vessel was written a misdemeanor citation for possession of an undersized red grouper.

Officer Specialist Bibeau stopped a vessel to conduct a fisheries inspection and found the two subjects in possession of thirty vermillion snapper, seven of which were undersized. Officer Specialist Bibeau wrote the operator of the vessel a misdemeanor citation for being over the daily bag limit of vermillion snapper and a warning for possession of undersized vermillion snapper.

Officer Specialist Bibeau located a vehicle parked in a city park after hours. He walked through the park and located the owner of the vehicle fishing from a small pier. Officer Specialist Bibeau conducted a fisheries inspection and located a fifteen-inch snook attached to a stringer. Officer Specialist Bibeau wrote the individual a misdemeanor citation for possession of a snook during closed season and a warning for possession of an undersized snook.

Officer Specialist Bibeau saw a vehicle parked off the side of the road near some mangroves. He parked nearby and waited for the owner to return to the vehicle. An individual walked out of the nearby mangroves carrying a large cooler and a cast net. When the individual saw Officer Specialist Bibeau, he attempted to run back into the mangroves, but was stopped. Officer Specialist Bibeau conducted a fisheries inspection and found the individual to be in possession of an undersized and out of season snook and a redfish. The individual admitted to catching the snook with the use of his cast net and that he had cut the tails off both fish. Officer Specialist Bibeau wrote the individual two misdemeanor citations and multiple warnings for the fisheries violations.

SARASOTA COUNTY

Officer Brown was dispatched to private property in the city of Nokomis to investigate a complaint of gopher tortoise burrows being destroyed by a developer. After a week-long investigation and numerous interviews, Officer Brown determined that the construction company developing the land had committed a criminal violation of destroying active gopher tortoise burrows. Officer Brown issued citations to the responsible persons in the construction company.

Officer Brown was on patrol around Manasota Key and performed a fisheries inspection on a man fishing from the shoreline. He found that the subject had caught and kept a red drum that was thirty-five inches long. The subject was cited criminally for possession of oversized red drum and possession of red drum during closed season.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

LEE COUNTY

Officers Winton and Garcia were on a waterborne directed conservation patrol, which targeted enforcement of commercial blue crab regulations on the Caloosahatchee River. They located a crabbing vessel actively pulling and setting traps and conducted inspections of several of the traps set by the subject. The traps did not have the appropriate escape rings installed, their vessel was not appropriately marked for commercial fishing, and the subject was pulling another harvester's traps without permission from the owner or FWC. The subject was issued a notice to appear for the violations and the traps involved were seized as evidence.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING – EXPANDING PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION

PASCO COUNTY

Senior Officer Pulaski conducted an outreach event in coordination with a summer camp program at Werner Boyce Salt Springs State Park. Senior Officer Pulaski educated ten youth and ten adults on boating safety and reviewed saltwater fishing regulations with the campers.

SOUTH REGION A

CASES

BROWARD COUNTY

Captive Wildlife Investigator Corteguera concluded an investigation regarding the escape of a cougar. Earlier this year, a cougar was found roaming a residential neighborhood. Investigator Corteguera captured and relocated the cat to a licensed facility. He initiated an investigation and identified the owner. Twenty misdemeanor charges were issued for the illegal possession of a cougar, allowing the escape, improper caging, and other related violations.

MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Hudson was conducting a vessel inspection at the Stuart Causeway when he saw a vessel almost collide with the dock. The operator exhibited signs of impairment

and field sobriety tasks were conducted. The operator was arrested for BUI and it was determined that he was on probation for a prior DUI and was not allowed to consume alcohol. The subject was booked into the Martin County Jail for boating under the influence, reckless operation, and for violating his probation. The subject was cited for refusal to submit to a breath test, no type IV throwable, no sound producing device, no fire extinguisher, and no registration on board.

Officers Morrow and Pecko conducted vessel inspections during the mini lobster season. On two separate stops, they located egg bearing lobster. Both subjects were issued misdemeanor citations accordingly.

Officers Hudson and Pecko were conducting boating safety and fisheries inspections when they saw a boat with the dive flag displayed. The officers conducted a vessel stop and found an egg bearing spiny lobster. The subject received a notice to appear citation for the violation.

Officers Hudson and Trawinski were on patrol on the opening night of the lobster mini season and saw subjects lobstering. Upon inspection of the vessel, the individuals were in possession of an egg bearing spiny lobster and an undersized spiny lobster. The individuals were given notice to appear citations for the violations.

Officer Hudson was conducting shore-based shark patrol when he saw two individuals fishing. Upon inspection, the individuals did not have a valid saltwater fishing license and one individual had a warrant for his arrest. The individual was placed under arrest and booked into the Martin County Jail for violation of probation and for an out of county warrant.

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officers Godward and Brodbeck were on patrol during the lobster mini season conducting boardings of approximately 40 vessels to ensure compliance with the regulations. Officer Brodbeck discovered a vessel with an egg-bearing lobster located in the vessel's live well. One subject took responsibility for the violation and was issued a criminal resource citation. The lobster was returned alive to the water.

Officers Trawinski and Hudson were on patrol during lobster mini season. They stopped a vessel to conduct a resource inspection. One person was on board, with two more in the water. The officers discovered an egg bearing lobster in the vessel and waited for the divers to come up. One diver surfaced and said he had a lobster that might be too small and needed to measure it. The officers explained that measuring lobster under water was required by law. One of the lobsters was short and the individuals were educated about lobster harvesting and appropriate citations were issued.

Officer Boyd and Lieutenant Hankinson were on patrol in Jupiter and saw a vessel pass by with no all-around navigational lights. They stopped the vessel to address the violation and found the captain did not have a functional fire extinguisher or a functional

sound producing device. The captain also showed indicators of impairment and standardized field sobriety tasks were conducted. The operator was arrested for boating under the influence and cited for violations regarding vessel safety navigational rules.

Captive Wildlife Investigators Corteguera, Howell, and Booth, along with Lieutenant Garzaniti, responded to the report of an escaped kinkajou. An individual said the animal showed up on his door step the previous night. He left watermelon out for it to eat and the next morning while leaving for work, the animal entered the house. While attempting to get it out of the house, the kinkajou bit and scratched him. FWC Investigators were able to secure the kinkajou and transport it to a licensed facility. Attempts to locate the owner of the animal were unsuccessful.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

PALM BEACH COUNTY

Officer Brodbeck took staff members from Loggerhead Marine Life Center six miles offshore to the gulf-stream to release approximately 100 hatchling sea turtles. The turtles were placed on and around sargassum mats to ensure the highest possibility of survival to adulthood.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING – EXPANDING PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION

MARTIN COUNTY

Officer Carroll saw a transformer explode during a storm which resulted in a live wire down across both northbound and southbound lanes of US 1. Officers Carroll and Brevik shut down US 1 to protect citizens from the live wire. Martin County Sheriff's Office and Fire Rescue arrived on scene to assist. The wire was removed from the roadway and no one was injured.

SOUTH REGION B

CASES

MIAMI DADE COUNTY

Officer Presser was conducting fisheries inspections in North Miami Beach. He saw a subject catch and keep a mangrove snapper that appeared to be undersized. A resource inspection revealed the subject was in possession of four mangrove snapper under the legal minimum size limit. The individual was cited for possession of undersized mangrove snapper and received a warning for not having a saltwater shoreline fishing license. All four undersized snapper were returned to the water alive.

Officer Bruder and Officer Stanton were on patrol checking popular fishing spots and boat ramps. At Haulover ramp, the officers stopped a boat and conducted a vessel safety and fishery inspection. As they approached the vessel, the officers saw parts of fish on board. The inspection revealed 13 undersized hog fish, 10 over the limit of hog fish, 4 dead parrot fish (3 of which were oversized), 3 undersized mutton snapper, one undersized red grouper, and 4 dead pork fish. The subjects were cited accordingly.

Officer Sample was on patrol in Oleta River State Park when he saw a man fishing from the pier. A fisheries inspection revealed several undersized mangrove snapper and mutton snapper underneath multiple plastic bags of bait in a cooler. Officer Sample also found a bag of shrimp with 4 mangrove snapper fillets hidden inside the shrimp, and another bag with a fillet of shark meat. The appropriate citations were issued for the violations.

Officer McKinley was on land-based water patrol when he encountered a subject on shore with two snook. One of the fish did not measure within the required slot limit. He was also cited for over the bag limit and the closed season harvest of snook without proper permit.

MONROE COUNTY

Officer Hudson was on plain clothes patrol when he saw an individual diving underneath a bridge. The officer watched the subject until he surfaced near his location. The officer asked if there were any lobster underneath the bridge. The subject said that there were lots of them underneath the bridge and that he did not have any because it was not lobster season. Further investigation found that the diver had concealed his catch in the mangroves. The officer then identified himself as a law enforcement officer and told the diver to retrieve the lobster he had harvested. The diver walked over to a mangrove tree and pulled a green lobster bag out of the mangrove roots. Inside was a lobster gauge and 13 out of season lobster. The subject was arrested and booked into the Plantation Key Jail for 20 misdemeanor violations for out of season lobster and over the bag limit of lobster.

Lieutenant Peters was on water patrol oceanside of Shark Key Channel, Big Coppitt Key. He conducted a resource inspection on an individual diving, actively harvesting lobster by means of hookah rig. Lieutenant Peters found 4 legal sized Florida spiny lobster located inside a cooler on the vessel. Inside the subjects catch bag there were 13 Florida spiny lobster, 1 of them being undersize. The subject was issued a notice to appear for 7 counts of over the bag limit of Florida spiny lobster and 1 count of possession of undersize Florida spiny lobster.

Officer Alvarez was on water patrol bayside near Conch Key. He saw a personal watercraft operating with the registration decal improperly displayed. He conducted a vessel stop and identified the operator and passenger as two adult males from the Netherlands. They explained to Officer Alvarez that they rented the PWC from a rental company on Conch Key. Due to the vessel being a rental, Officer Alvarez conducted a

safety gear inspection which resulted with the vessel not having a required sound producing device. Officer Alvarez completed the vessel stop and went to the PWC livery at Conch Key. He met with the owner of the company which was also the only employee of the company and conducted a livery inspection. Several violations were found including renting a vessel without proper safety equipment, renting vessels with no proof of insurance, not having the proper boating safety information displayed, and renting a PWC to customers without providing them with a safe handling course. The owner was cited with four misdemeanors for the violations.

Officer Alvarez received a call from Key Colony Beach Police Department (KCBPD) in reference to a possible marine violation. Officer Alvarez met with Officer Rodriguez with KCBPD. Officer Rodriguez explained he was responding to a call for service and noticed what he believed were illegal conch shells. Officer Alvarez went to where the conch was located and identified them as Queen Conch. The individuals had two Queen Conch in a pot of boiling water and several more in a cardboard box near the barbeque. Officer Alvarez interviewed all parties involved. The individuals thought since they saw stores and restaurants selling conch as meals, they could collect and consume Queen Conch. The subjects were cited with five misdemeanors for possession of Queen Conch.

An investigator was working plain clothes water patrol oceanside of Channel 2 bridge. He was watching a boat that had divers in the water. Another boat came extremely close to the vessel with divers. The inbound vessel made no effort to slow down. The investigator stopped the vessel to talk to the operator and cited him for reckless operation.

Officer Alvarez and Lieutenants Cox and Mahoney were on water patrol in the area of Summerland Key. They saw a vessel north of Niles Channel Bridge with a diver in the water without the required diver down flag displayed. As they approached the vessel, the diver exited the water. The occupants of the vessel said they had spiny lobster onboard. Lieutenant Cox inspected the vessels title and registration and noticed on both documents the vessel was classified as a homemade boat. The vessel was clearly manufactured by a company that false information was provided to DHSMV. After interviewing the owner of the vessel, it was determined that the owner and his step-father took possession of an abandoned vessel and built from the existing hull and claimed it to be homemade. This vessel was then given a new hull identification number and registration numbers. Lieutenant Cox told the owner that the vessel was going to be seized. All belongings on the vessel not pertaining to the current situation could be taken (fishing poles, dry boxes, dive gear), and the owner was to be placed under arrest. Once items were removed and the owner was under arrest, the vessel was towed to the nearest boat ramp. The owner was booked into jail with four felony charges; counterfeiting a certificate of title, forgery/altering a certificate of title, possessing a vessel with a removed/altered hull identification number, and use of false statement on bill of sale/application of title. The subject was also arrested on a misdemeanor charge for operating a vessel without a hull identification number and was issued two boating citations.

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Wagner and Rubenstein were on land patrol in the Picayune Wildlife Management Area checking for violations specific to the upcoming archery season. They noticed a vehicle in the area after hours and conducted a vehicle stop. The driver stated that he had just put up his stand. The officers explained equipment can only be put up the day before opening day. Inside the vehicle was a bow case along with two rifle cases. The officers asked the subject to take them to the location of his stand. The officers followed him to the stand and could smell the odor of apples, a common deer attractant. The subject showed the officers where he placed his stand and the commercial deer apple flavored attractant. The subject was cited accordingly.

Officer Conroy was patrolling Tigertail Beach. She noticed a man actively fishing in the lagoon. As she approached him, she saw a blue rope around the man's waist. She announced herself and asked the man if he had any fish. He pointed to a bait bucket tied off to the rope. The inspection revealed two red drum and one black drum. The fish were measured and were the correct size, but he was over the bag limit for red drum. The subject was cited appropriately.

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING – EXPANDING PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION

MIAMI DADE COUNTY

While conducting resource inspections in Key Biscayne, Officer Cartaya had the opportunity to meet with the young adults of the Mahogany Youth Group who were conducting a mini saltwater fishing camp on the Rickenbacker Fishing Pier. They were provided with recreational saltwater fishing regulations and explained the importance of following the rules in order to sustain our saltwater fisheries resource.

MAJOR WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

COLLIER COUNTY

Officer Yurewitch responded to a call about an alligator in a pool. When he arrived at the location, he saw an approximately 7-foot alligator in a community clubhouse pool. The officer learned that this alligator had become a nuisance in the neighborhood. The officer and state contracted nuisance alligator trapper successfully removed the 7' 4" male alligator from the pool.

DIRECTED CONSERVATION PATROLS

COLLIER COUNTY

Officers Curbelo, Thurkettle, Oldsen and Reams conducted speed enforcement in the panther zone on Tamiami Trail. The officers issued numerous speeding tickets and warnings and educated the public on the importance of reducing their speed in the panther zones at night. The highest speed recorded was 77 MPH in a 45 MPH zone.